

Soul in the Stone: Cemetery Art From America's Heartland

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Soul in the Stone: Cemetery Art from America's Heartland, by John Gary Brown. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994. viii, 246 pp. 223 black-and-white photographs, bibliography. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY J. JOSEPH EDGETTE, WIDENER UNIVERSITY

John Gary Brown's photographic journey through America's heartland cemeteries successfully presents and represents a regional array of funerary monuments. The place of cemeteries in our culture is clearly and accurately introduced, and a brief but necessary history of the cemetery movement in America follows, with some background about selected, representative burial grounds. Attention is given to defining and explaining the significance of *motif*, *symbolism*, *epitaph*, *ethnicity*, and *monument makers*. The remainder and greater part of the book provides a photographic tour of some of the most magnificent grave-markers in mid-American cemeteries. Of particular interest is Brown's focus on those dedicated to the memory of children, the broad depiction of various occupations, and the presence of rich ethnic diversity. Finally, a brief but appropriate bibliography is provided.

Brown's contribution to the growing corpus of gravemarker scholarship is definitely a significant one. His photographic genius and his understanding of the importance of funerary art within our culture makes for an excellent treatment of the subject for all who have an interest. Scholars in the field as well as students of the history of Iowa and mid-America will find this work an exceptionally useful source. Brown has captured the essence of what cemetery art is all about through his remarkable photographs and his crisp, insightful narratives on each. Through careful attention the reader will be introduced to some of the finest representations of regional cemetery art found in America's heartland. Only the absence of an index keeps the book from being a perfect "10."

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